

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

11.30am 14 MAY 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING- SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Platts (Chair), Mac Cafferty and Bell.

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Chair stated:

Welcome to this virtual P&R Urgency Sub-Committee meeting. The meeting itself has been called as a matter of urgency to deal with the five items listed on the agenda.

To assist the members of the public, press and councillors who are interested in the items on the agenda and to endeavour to maintain our openness and transparency for the democratic process the meeting is also being webcast.

I want to repeat our thanks all council staff across the departments who are working flat out and around the clock to deliver vital services to our residents in difficult circumstances. We are working hard to keep fundamental and critical services running; protecting our most vulnerable residents.

We're urgently reviewing the government's recovery strategy document to work out how best to manage the new guidance. Our priority, as always, is to keep people who live in the city safe. We need to make sure residents can continue to use all the city's open spaces safely, and we are still asking people who don't live here not to travel to Brighton & Hove. We need a steady and safe progression towards lifting the restrictions, which means maintaining physical distancing and protecting lives. That's why I am urging visitors to stay away from Brighton & Hove, because my top priority is to keep people living in the city safe.

This urgency sub-committee has been called to progress some urgent business, which I believe will benefit our city.

There is the Transport Strategy report, to allow us to set up an interim Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan fit for the response to COVID-19, and to create more space for residents to walk and cycle at a safe social distance.

There is a report to allow us to provide emergency support to Home to School Transport operators, so they can survive the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and resume the essential service they offer when schools re-open. There is also a report to agree the next steps of accommodating the homeless and rough sleepers by occupying University of Brighton student accommodation units, to try and ensure people do not return to the streets when current restrictions are lifted.

All of the reports before us today will aid the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and support the residents we serve, and I hope they gain cross-party support.

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 There were none.

(b) Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were no declarations of interests in matters listed on the agenda.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

1.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items contained in part two of the agenda.

2 COVID - 19 DEATH MANAGEMENT : FINANCIAL REPORT

2.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director for Health and Adult Social Care which presented the costs for delivering the Pan Sussex Death Management Plan and set out how it would be distributed across Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council.

2.2 Councillor Mac Cafferty noted that there was likely to be a second wave of infection from Covid 19 and asked if that was being considered within the plans. The Executive Director for Health and Adult Social Care confirmed that the modelling for the Pan Sussex Death Management Plan looked at both the first wave and what could happen if there were a second or third wave of the pandemic. He added that the Public Health Team, were looking at the possibility of further waves of Covid 19.

2.3 Councillor Bell noted that the Government was being guided by Public Health England on steps to take if there were a second or third wave and added that it was important for everyone to work together for the residents of the City. The Executive Director for Health and Adult Social Care agreed and said all parties across the county were working well together.

2.4 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed a further contribution of £0.068m to the pan-Sussex response to death management of the COVID-19 pandemic based on the

council's share of 17% of a maximum additional Sussex-wide spend of £0.400m. This is in addition to the £0.046m contribution (17% of £0.270m) reported to Policy & Resources Committee on 30th April.

3 TRANSPORT STRATEGY - COVID19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO TRANSPORT AND REALLOCATING ROAD SPACE

- 3.1 The Committee considered the report of Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture which sought to identify transport network measures that the City could take in the short term to respond to the Covid-19 emergency and proposed that an interim Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan was prepared to outline the city's response in the medium term.
- 3.2 The Chair said that a joint amendment from the Green and Labour Groups had been submitted and asked Councillor Mac Cafferty to propose the amendment.
- 3.3 Councillor Mac Cafferty welcomed the report but felt that the proposals did not go far enough and did not capture the spirit of the Green Group amendment to the Local Transport Plan report which was agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 30 April 2020. That amendment had looked at the impact of the pandemic and future needs of the city including widening pavements, improving the cycle network and allowing residents to take safe daily exercise. He said that a key element which was missing from this report was the seafront and therefore the amendment included the A259, and changes to that road would signal a city which was recovering differently. The amendment included measures which were set out in the Government guidance on what steps could be taken with traffic. Councillor Mac Cafferty proposed the following amendments to the recommendations (changes in bold italics):

To amend recommendations 2.4 and to add recommendations 2.7

- 2.4 That officers should commission an interim Covid-19 Response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, using the consultant team that are currently developing the LCWIP for Brighton & Hove. ***That the committee requests that officers use the development of the interim Covid-19 response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan to consider a longer-term strategic approach that seeks to deliver the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and in particular, the transition of the city to Carbon Neutral in 2030. That the committee calls for this more detailed interim Plan to support these aims to report to the ETS committee in June.***

- 2.7 That the committee requests that officers look specifically again at the feasibility of the following options as part of the urgent response and the interim Plan:***

- ***interventions along the A259, considering all of the measures contained within the government guidance such as modal filters, or pedestrian and cycle zones;***
- ***further footway widening to create 'low traffic neighbourhoods' on a trial basis and, in the longer term, permanent reallocation of road space to pedestrians;***

- ***That the Old Town area and North Laine area of the city centre be considered for low traffic neighbourhoods in consultation with local businesses, residents and business partners;***
- ***utilising a wider range of traffic calming and reduction measures, including physical segregation tools such as wands or planters, indications and signage to identify pedestrian and cycling zones (including further options for two-way cycle routes) and other measures to reduce car access that can be brought into high footfall areas, to immediately minimise the amount of non-essential private vehicle access (prioritising resident, trader and blue-badge holder access)***

3.4 Councillor Platts thanked everybody who had got in touch to outline their thoughts and ideas for the transport strategy response to COVID-19, including Elly and Pedal People, Mark Strong, Colin Todd and Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth, Andrew Boag and Brighton Buswatch, Angela Devas and Brighton & Hove Clarion Cycling Club, Becky Reynolds and Bricycles, and to everybody who got in touch via Cycling UK and individually. Many of the ideas had been incorporated into the report and the joint amendment put forward by the Labour and Green Groups. The comments would be fed back to the Chair of ETS (Councillor Pissaridou) in advance of the more detailed Action Plan coming before that Committee on the 23 of June 2020 and encouraged people to continue sending Councillor Pissaridou their ideas ahead of that meeting. The Chair seconded the proposed amendment.

3.5 Councillor Bell said that the Conservative Group supported the proposed amendments. He referred to the Old Shoreham Road and asked when data would be available to show what difference the proposals would make to the number who were walking or cycling and what consideration was being taken with the likely increase in traffic when the refuse tip was re-opened. He said that Government funding was available and noted that the Council would be applying for that. He asked for reassurance that the Authority would consult with residents on the proposed changes. He suggested that as there was currently less traffic, whether buses could be moved to the normal traffic lanes, which would allow pedestrians and cyclists to use the bus lanes. As it was likely that the schools would re-open in June he suggested that roads close to the schools, particularly those that were narrower, could be pedestrianised. He also suggested that the possibility of a Park and Ride or Coach Park be looked at. The Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture said that the impact on the Old Shoreham Road would be monitored and the ETS Committee would be kept up to date with the findings. With regard to Government funding, the Council was waiting for more details on whether the money be allocated or whether it would be necessary to bid for it. With regard to consultation, the Council needed to ensure that it followed the correct process but also moved quickly to respond to the public health crisis. If TROs were needed the correct statutory process would be followed. He confirmed that streets near to schools would be monitored and referred to the Draft Action Plan in the report. With regard to re-allocating bus lanes, that was also covered in the report and consideration was being given to that. In the recent budget, funding was allocated for the feasibility of a Park and Ride scheme and although that study had not yet started yet it would be undertaken in the near future.

3.6 The Urgency Sub-Committee voted on the proposed amendment and it was agreed.

3.7 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee –

- (1) Noted the temporary measures that have been implemented as part of the transport strategy response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the closure of Madeira Drive and the road space reallocation to create temporary cycle lanes along the Old Shoreham Road be noted;
- (2) Approved the Urgent Response Action Plan and policy framework set out in Appendix A to assess and agree Covid-19 related measures in the timeframes set out;
- (3) Agreed that the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture be granted delegated authority for the delivery of the temporary measures contained in the Urgent Response Action Plan to the during the pandemic recovery phase;
- (4) Agreed that officers should commission an interim Covid-19 Response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, using the consultant team that are currently developing the LCWIP for Brighton & Hove. That the committee requests that officers use the development of the interim Covid-19 response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan to consider a longer-term strategic approach that seeks to deliver the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and in particular, the transition of the city to Carbon Neutral in 2030. That the committee calls for this more detailed interim Plan to support these aims to report to the ETS committee in June.
- (5) Agreed that the Action Plan should be reviewed for progress at the October meeting of the Environment, Transport and Sustainability committee;
- (6) Requested that officers look specifically again at the feasibility of the following options as part of the urgent response and the interim Plan:
 - interventions along the A259, considering all of the measures contained within the government guidance such as modal filters, or pedestrian and cycle zones;
 - further footway widening to create 'low traffic neighbourhoods' on a trial basis and, in the longer term, permanent reallocation of road space to pedestrians;
 - That the Old Town area and North Laine area of the city centre be considered for low traffic neighbourhoods in consultation with local businesses, residents and business partners;
 - utilising a wider range of traffic calming and reduction measures, including physical segregation tools such as wands or planters, indications and signage to identify pedestrian and cycling zones (including further options for two-way cycle routes) and other measures to reduce car access that can be brought into high footfall areas, to immediately minimise the amount of non-essential private vehicle access (prioritising resident, trader and blue-badge holder access)

4 EMERGENCY AGREEMENT TO SUPPLIER RELIEF FOR HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT OPERATORS

- 4.1 The Committee considered the report of the Interim Executive Director Families Children & Schools which provided a record of the use of officer urgency powers by the Interim Executive Director Families, Children and Learning in respect of supplier relief to Home to School Transport (HTST) providers.
- 4.2 Councillor Mac Cafferty noted that some of the HTST providers assisted the authority with additional information about some of the children who either already had social worker support or were on the Council's radar, and was concerned how that would continue during this crisis and the recovery period. The Interim Executive Director Families Children & Schools said that home to school transport providers did build relationships with the children they transported to and from school. Those children could be some of the most vulnerable children due to their additional needs and specific disabilities. However, that didn't necessarily translate into a safeguarding concern as they could be classed as a child in need due to their disability under the Children Act. Those providers had a relation with those children and so could become a bridge between home and school, and that was their primary focus rather than performing any kind of safeguarding function.
- 4.3 Councillor Bell asked if the new service would be looking at the safeguarding of children and if the new contracts awarded from September would be for the full year. The Interim Executive Director Families Children & Schools said that a report was being prepared for the P&R Committee meeting in May which would set out the delivery model for the home to school transport service, and that would provide the assurance on safeguarding children and said that the existing contracts would be rolled over for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- 4.4 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the use of officer urgency powers by the Interim Executive Director Families Children and Learning in respect of supplier relief to Home to School Transport providers be noted.
 - (2) That the provision of supplier relief as detailed in the in the report be agreed.

5 HOMELESS & ROUGH SLEEPER ACCOMMODATION NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities and the Executive Director Health & Adult Social Care which set out the risks and opportunities of accommodation for rough sleepers under the current Covid 19 restrictions and the need to ensure that those who were homeless were in safe accommodation.
- 5.2 The Chair noted that there was also a Part Two Item (Item 6) on the agenda which contained confidential information relating to this report and said that if the Members wished to discuss that information the meeting would go to closed session. Both Councillors Bell and Mac Cafferty said that they were content to only refer to Part One issues.

- 5.3 Councillor Mac Cafferty suggested that this may be an opportunity to house and work with all rough sleepers to stop them returning to the streets. He asked who was leading on the personal housing plans, whether there could be an out of hours contact for enquiries from local residents and whether the re-housing numbers could be monitored and fed back to Councillors, so they could check that the relevant goals had been achieved. The Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities said that the longer-term plan was set out in section 7 of the report and that there would be a more detailed report coming to the Housing Committee in July 2020. The housing plans were the responsibility of the Council, but officers would also be working with other relevant parties. The issue of an out of hours contact point was raised earlier by ward councillors and that would be followed up, and with regard to re-housing there would be a report going to the July 2020 Housing Committee on that issue.
- 5.4 Councillor Bell referred to plan to relocate provision to the University of Sussex and noted that there were few amenities in that area and asked what support would be given. He asked what the plans would be after 4th September 2020 and added that there were a high number of people on the waiting list for social housing and asked for assurance that they would not be overlooked. The Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities said that they would be using the halls of residence at the University of Brighton, rather than Sussex University, and there were more amenities in that area and the Council would be working with the local Ward Councillors. He said that the Council were looking at plans after 4th September 2020, and there would be a more detailed report at the Housing Committee meeting in July. Those on the waiting list would remain a focus for the Authority, and the continued intention was to provide more housing.
- 5.5 The Chair said there needed to be a solution to the national housing crisis, and everyone wanted to find a permanent solution and not to have people sleeping on the streets again.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed -
- (1) The next steps and moving to the next phase of accommodation so that people are not at risk of returning to the street when restrictions are lifted.
 - (2) To enter into contract [Licence to Occupy] with the University of Brighton for 222 units of student accommodation as move on from initial accommodation acquired under Covid-19 Urgency Powers.
- 6 HOMELESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER ACCOMMODATION NEXT STEPS - EXEMPT CATEGORY 3**
- 6.1 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
- 7 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS**
- 7.1 **RESOLVED:** That the items listed in Part Two of the agenda and decisions thereon should remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of